

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SCCT-01 OMB-01 /058 W

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P R 300600Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1159

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC HONOLULU

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0058

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PP

SUBJECT: BOUGAINVILLE TIGHTROPE

1. LOCAL PRESS JANUARY 30 REPORTS GPNG HAS INCREASED POLICE MOBILE SQUADS TO EIGHT AND TWO MORE SCHEDULED ARRIVE TODAY. POLICE ALLEGEDLY IN CONTROL OF ALL KEY CENTERS IN BOUGAINVILLE EXCEPT BUIN. DESPITE REMARKS MADE BY PRIME MINISTER NIGHT OF JANUARY 29 THAT LIFE OF SIR PAUL LAPUN (MINISTER OF HEALTH) WAS BEING THREATENED, PRESS STATES LAPUN IS BELIEVED TO BE SAFE AND WELL. POLICE SOURCES, ACCORDING TO PRESS "HAD NO TROUBLE BEFORE MIDDAY YESTERDAY IN GETTING INTO SIR PAUL'S VILLAGE" AND RETURNING.

2. SOMARE'S STATEMENT CLAIMED SIR PAUL WAS BEING THREATENED BY PRO-SECESSIONISTS AND THAT "THIS IS AN INTOLERABLE SITUATION AND POLICE WILL MOVE TO REESTABLISH LAW AND ORDER." HE ASSERTED THAT THE MOBS CAUSING TROUBLE IN SOUTH BOUGAINVILLE ARE REFUSING TO LISTEN TO THEIR  
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OWN LEADERS. SOMARE STATED THAT SAREI AND MOMIS BOTH

ACCEPTED THE REASONS GIVEN FOR THE NECESSARY POLICE ACTION.

3. POLOFF DISCUSSED SITUATION ON 30TH WITH BOUGAINVILLE COPPER REP KEN MCKENZIE WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY OFFICER IN FIRST PACIFIC ISLANDS REGIMENT, HAS ACCESS TO CURRENT GPNG THINKING AND HAS SPENT SOME YEARS ON BOUGAINVILLE. HE ASSERTS PNG GOVT IS SPLIT. NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF COMMANDER PNGDF DIRO, POLICE COMMISSIONER KEREPIA, SEC OF CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICE BOURAGA, SEC DEFENCE LEVI, SEC DFRT SIAGURU, ALL WANTING TO "BASH" THE SECESSIONISTS. THE CABINET, LED BY SOMARE, IS OPPOSED TO CONFRONTATION. MCKENZIE ASSERTS PRESS ACCOUNT RE SIR PAUL LAPUN WAS IN ERROR. AT LUNCHTIME YESTERDAY LAPUN ATTEMPTED ESCAPE FROM HIS VILLAGE BUT HIS CAR WAS STOPPED BY SECESSIONISTS ON ROAD, STONED, AND LAPUN WAS BEATEN UP. FORTUITOUSLY A PNGDF SIGNAL OFFICER WAS PRESENT AT SCENE AND CALLED IN POLICE WHO RESCUED LAPUN BUT COULD ONLY TAKE HIM BACK TO VILLAGE. DEEP PERSONAL REGARD BY CHIEF MINISTER FOR LAPUN (OLD GUARD ORIGINAL PANGU MEMBER) AND WORRY OVER HIS WELL BEING COULD PROD SOMARE TO POINT OF UNLEASHING HAWKS.

4. MOMIS AND SAREI ARE NOW ALLEGEDLY WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH SOMARE AND DROP PRE-CONDITION OF SECESSION, MCKENZIE SAYS. GPNG FOR ITS PART IS WILLING ALLOW CREATION OF BOUGAINVILLE PROVINCIAL GOVT WITH CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY, AND GOOD FINANCING PROVIDED SECESSION THREAT BURIED. BOUGAINVILLE WOULD BE TREATED AS GENUINE SPECIAL CASE. FURTHERMORE SPLIT IS EMERGING BETWEEN THE MOMIS/SAREI FACTION AND HANNETT. MOMIS/SAREI FACTION HAS LOOKED INTO ABYSS AND IS FEARFUL OF DRIFT TOWARD INCREASED VIOLENCE. THEY MAY TRY OUST HANNETT, BUT THAT ERRATIC FORCE MAY BE DIFFICULT TO DISLODGE. LASTLY, ALOYSIUS NOGA WHO HOLDS SWAY IN THE SOUTH IS AN UNSTABLE AND PASSIONATE PARTISAN WHO SWITCHES ALLIANCES DEPENDING ON WHO APPEARS TO BE WINNING. HE IS NOW FOLLOWING HANNETT.

5. MCKENZIE STATES MINE IS VERY VULNERABLE, AND  
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ANY IDEA OF PROTECTING IT SHOULD BE ABANDONED. AS FORMER OFFICER SERVING WITH AUSTRALIAN FORCES IN VIETNAM HE BELIEVES IT WOULD REQUIRE AT LEAST ONE INFANTRY DIVISION TO HOLD MINE, 20 MILES OF ROAD THROUGH RUGGED TERRAIN, PORT FACILITIES, ARAWA TOWN, WATER SUPPLY AND POWER STATION.

6. COMMENT: FOR NEXT DAY OR TWO SITUATION WILL BE

QUITE UNSTABLE. ACCORDING TO NOON RADIO, LAPUN WILL  
BE FLOWN KIETA THIS AFTERNOON AND HIS SAFETY WILL  
EASE TENSIONS. MOMIS AND SAREI FOR THEIR PART MUST  
ISOLATE AND RESTRAIN HANNETT, WHILE SOMARE MUST KEEP  
THE HAWKS OF THE BUREAUCRACY IN LINE. THERE NOW  
ARE 10 OF PNG'S MOBIL POLICE SQUADS (WITH FIRE  
POWER OF ONE INFANTRY BATTALION, IN BOUGAINVILLE,  
AND THE 1ST BTLN PIR IS ON STANDBY STATUS AT TAURAMA  
BARRACKS, MORESBY. AN IRRESPONSIBLE INCIDENT COULD  
RESULT IN A NASTY CONFRONTATION AND PERHAPS GPNG  
MILITARY INTERVENTION.  
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